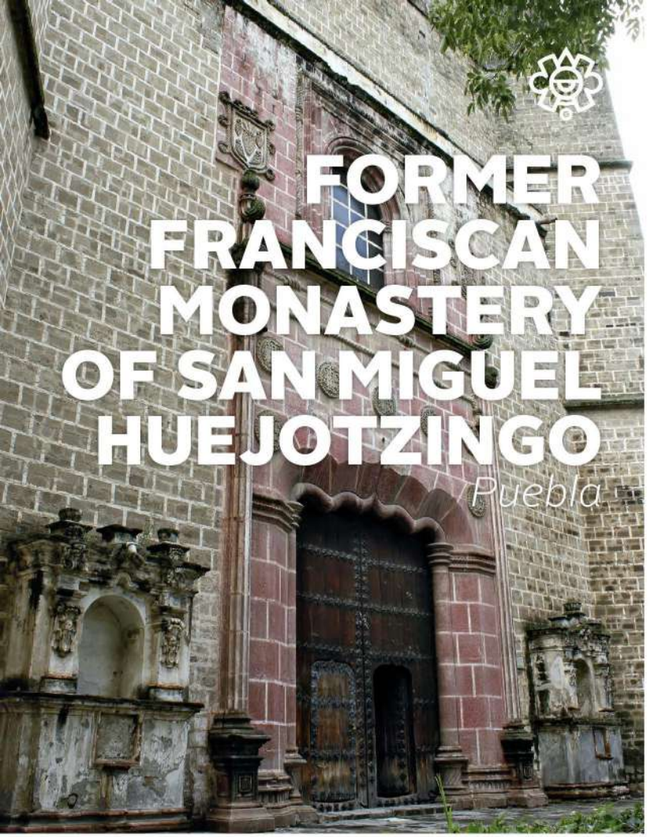


FORMER FRANCISCAN MONASTERY OF SAN MIGUEL HUEJOTZINGO

Puebla

/ HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Valley of Huejotzingo was the corridor and setting for different cultures and archaeologists say people have inhabited this area for more than 1500 years. Early on they were hunters and gatherers, then after the introduction of Olmec influence into the region, agriculture began in the valley.

Olmeca-Xicalanca and Tolteca-Chichimeca ethnic groups predominated in this region and were the founders of the realms of Huejotzingo and Cholula. These two groups dominated the area between AD 600 and 1292 and came to the region one after the other, but taking different routes.

Muñoz Camargo, describes these ancestral peoples:

The ancestors of the Huexotzincas first settled in the Valley of Mexico, in the place known as Payahuatlan, together with the future Tlaxcaltecas . . . On the foothills of the sierra the Chalmecas and Hulmecas [Olmecas] remained, and the Chicalancas [Xicalancas] went to the snow-capped mountains of Huexotzinco . . . And here in this place the Hulmecas made their principal settlement and they dwelled there.

/ MAIN ATTRACTION

Painted mural

The Local Museum of the Evangelization displays a fresco depicting the twelve Franciscan missionaries who arrived in New Spain in 1524 and who started the conversion of the locals to Christianity and the construction of monasteries in New Spain. This painting bears an Old Spanish inscription that means:

"These twelve very fortunate and blessed friars were the earliest founders of the faith in this new church . . . year of 1524 on the day of the conversion of Saint Paul and the statue arrived on Friday the eve of Pentecost of the same year 4."

The names of the twelve Franciscans were: Juan Palos, Francisco Jiménez, García de Cisneros, Toribio de Benavente "Motolinia," Francisco de Soto, Martín de Valencia, Miguel de Jesús or Martín de la Coruña, Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, Juan Rivas, Juan Juárez, Luis de Fuensalida, and Andrés de Córdova.
The murals complementing the decoration of this gallery show:

Scene of the Washing of the Feet, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Bonaventure and Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Luis Bishop (of Toulouse) and Saint Didacus of Alcalá, Saint Clare of Assisi and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Saint Catherine and Saint Barbara.

The frieze that goes around the entire wall shows one of the earliest grotesques used as a design in a monastery in New Spain.

Where to see it

Sala de Profundis (anterefectory), on the ground floor of the monastery, on the east side of the cloister, where priests said grace before meals.





PLACE NAME

Huejotzingo or Huexotzinco is a word composed of two Nahuatl words: **Ahuexotl**: cypress, **-tzin**: diminutive, and **-co**: place, and it means: "On the small cypress or place of the small cypresses." The name of this town is related to that of Huexotla, because Huexotzinco is its diminutive equivalent.



/ COLLECTION

The main focus of the Local Museum of the Conversion is based on a series of movable items, objects, sculptures, and oil paintings, as well as frescoes or murals that recreate monastic life in the sixteenth century.

/ HOW TO GET THERE

If you're coming from Mexico City, you can take the Mexico-Puebla highway to kilometer 75, where you need to enter the Mexico-Puebla federal highway and on the outskirts of the town of San Martín Texmelucan, there is a turnoff, on the north side of this town, going toward Puebla, and if you continue for 8 kilometers more, you will reach Huejotzingo.
Or take a bus run by the Estrella Roja company (different departure points).

/ SERVICES

Guided tour, restrooms, coat check.

/ $ ADMISSION

$55.00 Mexican pesos. According to the Federal Fees Act, admission is free for students, teachers, and seniors with a valid ID; children under 13 and people with a disability.
Sundays: Free admission for Mexican citizens and foreign residents.

/ PHOTOGRAPHY

For the use of any device to make videos, visitors must pay the stipulated fee. Non-professional photography, without the use of tripods, is free of charge, and must be done without a flash.

/ HOURS

Tuesday to Sunday from 9:00 am to 5:45 pm.

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/GALLERIES

- Main facade

  It is organized in three levels and along three axes.

  The main door opens on the first level; the second level has the choir window with a rectangular frame, with the representation of the Franciscan cord carved in stone.

  The parapet of the upper level is crowned by triangular merlons, which occupy the roofline of the entire church. A later small tower was built on the top of the main facade at the southwest corner of the church, while the opposite side has a small sixteenth-century belfry.

- Porziuncola Door

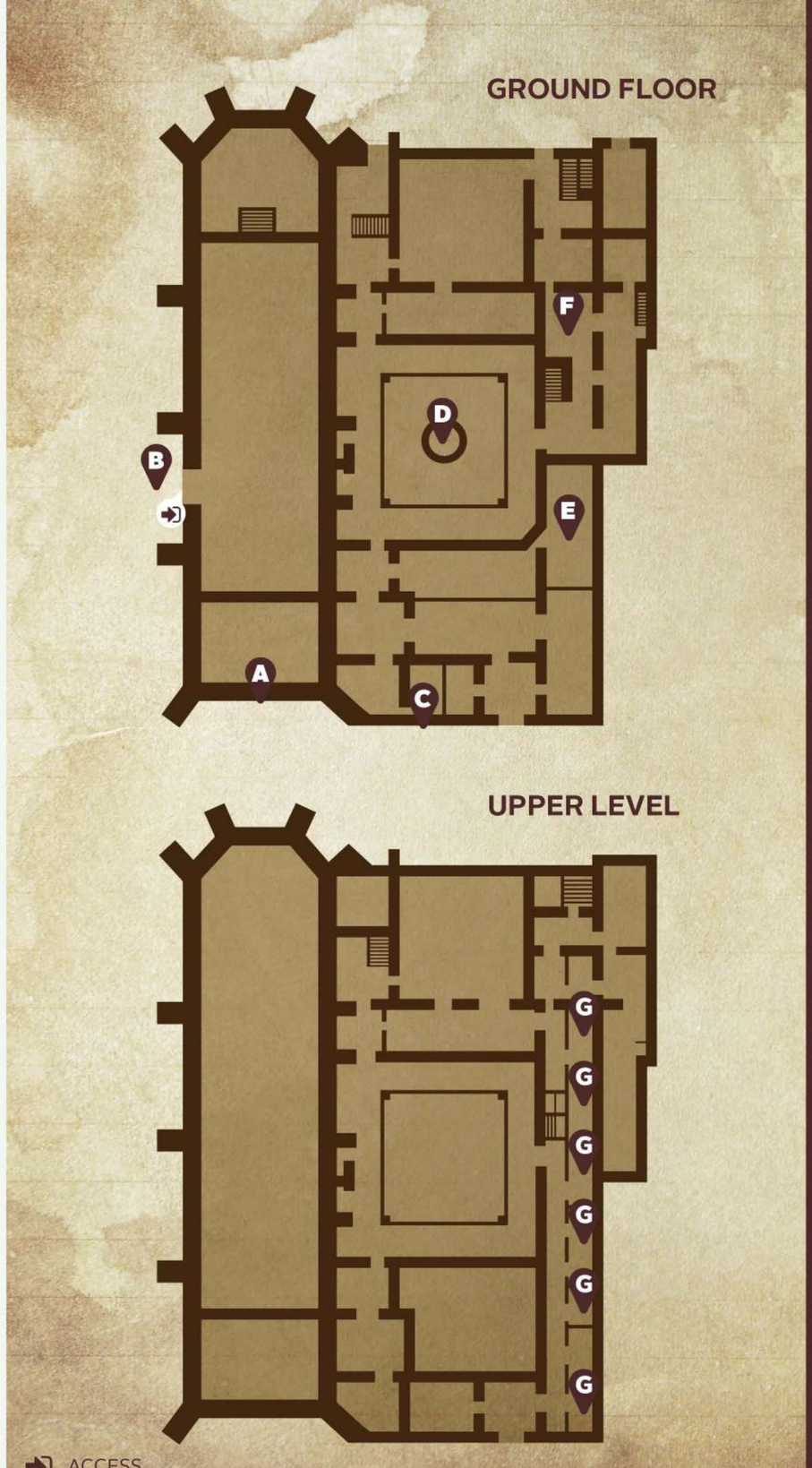
  The builders worked meticulously on the side doors, generally to the north. These were popularly known as "Porziuncola doors" in memory of the Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi. This door can be found in almost all Franciscan monasteries.

- Gatehouse

  The gatehouse together with the locutory were the places where ordinary people were allowed to enter the monastery. "There are in all monastic houses gatekeepers recommendable for their diligence, urbanity, and integrity of customs; in larger monasteries two, and in others one, they attend to the gatehouse and it must always be closed" (rules of the Friars Minor or Franciscans).

/ AND DON'T MISS

- September 17 to October 1. The annual fair celebrating Saint Michael the Archangel, patron saint of the town of Huejotzingo.
- December 15 to January 6. The annual Sidra Fair, where you can sample Mexico's sparkling cider, made from fermented apples.
- Four days before Ash Wednesday. Carnival in Huejotzingo, where mock battles and a love story are reenacted by entourages of masked dancers.
- The Gothic-style church of Our Lady of Mount Carmen in the First Barrio of Huejotzingo
- The chapel dedicated to Saint Didacus of Alcalá, located in the Fourth Barrio of Huejotzingo.



GROUND FLOOR

- A *Main facade*
- B *Porziuncola Door*
- C *Gate*
- D *Cloister*
- E *Refectory*
- F *Kitchen*

UPPER LEVEL

- G *Cells*

- Cloister

  The cloister, of great beauty and serenity, was an area exclusive for the Franciscans. People in the community were prohibited from entering this area. The cloister was delimited by round arches of Renaissance influence.

- Dining room or refectory

  The refectory or dining room must have stood out for its austerity and simplicity, without any furnishings other than the tables for the friars. There was also a table for the superior and the friars who were teachers, and the place for the required reading that was heard as the meal was eaten.

- Kitchen

  The central element of the kitchen was the enormous chimney or stove with an impressive shaft to reduce smoke.

  An aqueduct reached the kitchen to fill the water tank beside the door.

  A Franciscan saint, Paschel Baylon, was the patron saint of friars who were cooks.

  This spot was linked to the cold storage area and the bakery.

- Cells or sleeping chambers

  The cells or sleeping chambers were individual. It was prohibited for friars to enter the cells of other friars.

  The furniture had to be strictly indispensable such as the straw mattress or plain wood pallet bed covered with a blanket, a table, and perhaps a wardrobe.

  In this cell, the primitive construction system of the interior walls of the monastery, known as wattle and daub, can be seen over the door.



/ The former Franciscan monastery of San Miguel Huejotzingo is a beautiful example of the austere, magnificent convents from the early sixteenth century; it has come down to us as a superb example of Colonial architecture.